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Press office: +389 2 310 2314

Cell phone: +389 (0)70 367 547

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

Project Info: mlipkovska@usaid.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Energy Efficiency Upgrades Save Energy and Reduce Costs

Today, U.S. Ambassador Philip T. Reeker, together with Minister of Economy Fatmir Besimi, helped dedicate a building that is part of the USAID Residential Energy Efficiency-Social Safety Net Initiative. The project's main goal is to demonstrate that investments in energy efficiency upgrades can significantly reduce energy consumption and costs for low-income households in Macedonia. The project will also help Macedonia's low-income households to improve their living comfort and reduce their energy costs.

At the same time, investing in such upgrades can have a significant impact on the economy. "Energy efficiency upgrades are labor intensive and can generate a significant number of new jobs in related industries," said Ambassador Reeker. "This type of job-creating assistance is helping to address the unemployment problem here in Macedonia."

USAID is starting a new project with Habitat for Humanity to build upon the achievements of this pilot. The new project will target seven municipalities, including Karposh, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Struga, Prilep, Veles, and Strumica, and will include a new financing model to ensure that energy efficiency improvements in residential buildings are sustainable over the long term.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Residential Energy Efficiency-Social Safety Net pilot project is part of a regional USAID initiative. The International Resource Group (IRG) is implementing the work, supported by the Prague-based energy efficiency center SEVEN and two local Macedonian entities - Habitat for Humanity Macedonia and Timel Proekt. Badzak Inzenering conducted the construction work, and the SMMRI survey company conducted the detailed surveys before and after the interventions.

The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.